

25
A
SERMON

Directing

What we are to do,

AFTER

Strict Enquiry whether or
no we truly Love God.

Preached *April 29.* 1688.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst* at the
Bible and Three Crowns, in Cheap-
side, near Mercers Chapel. 1688.

25. June.

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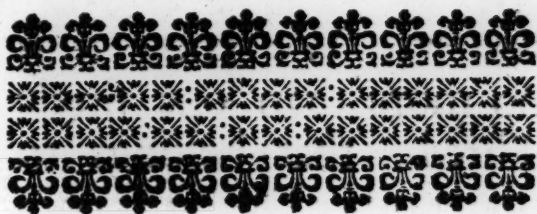
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YOU may remember
what a solemn Awe
was upon our Congrega-
tion lately at the Preaching
of this ensuing Sermon, and
that not a few tears drop'd
at the hearing of it. This
engaged some of us to en-
treat our Reverend Pastor,
to give way, that by this
Publication, it might be
accommodated to your
A 2 review.

The Epistle.

review. We know it is no more than one single Thred, that belongs to many other Discourses upon the same Subject, which have preceded, & to others, which we hope, will follow; but such as by your Notes and Memories may easily be wrought into the whole Piece: It is but a Thred, yet a golden one, and may contribute to the service of the Tabernacle, as in *Exod. 25*. We know it is a great condescension in him to suffer such an imperfect Piece to come abroad,

The Epistle.

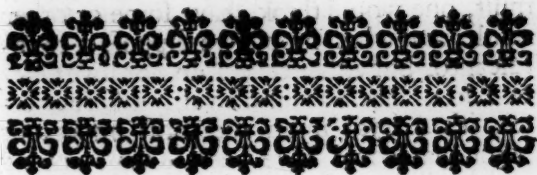
abroad, but when the Reverend Dean of C. and other learned persons of the Church of *England* have denyed themselves by suffering such small Prints for the general good, we are perswaded, tho' he gave not a positive Judgment for it, he will not dislike that which is for your service, and is intended to go no farther. Receive it therefore, read it over and over, and allot some times for the putting in practice the grand Examination urged upon us,

The Epistle.

and do your utmost to
persuade all under your
Roofs and Commands to
do the like, that that which
was Preached with so
much holy Fervor and Af-
fection may beget in us
and ours a bright flame
of Divine Love to our
good LORD, to whom
we commend you, and
are

*Your Affectionate Brethren
and Servants, &c.*

Joh.



Joh. 5. 42. *But I know
you, that ye have not the
love of God in you.*

YOU have heard several Discourses
from this Scripture, and from
another in the same Gospel: That
we spoke to alternately with
this at several times: *Thou knowest all
things Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,*
c. 20. 17. and that which after doctrinal ex-
plication hath hitherto been insisted on,
was an inquiry into the state of our own
case in reference hereunto. Are we lovers
of God in Christ, or are we not? There
have been many things signified to you by
which this case might be discerned: and
that which remains and most naturally fol-
lows hereupon, is to direct you what you
are to do, supposing your case upon inqui-
ry to be this or that. Why such an inquiry,
if it hath been attended to at all amongst
us,

us, it must have signified somewhat ; It must, one would think, have some or other result, and what should we suppose it to result into, but either this, I do not love God, or I do ? These are most vastly different cases ; it's a tryal upon the most important point that could have been discust among us ; and supposing there should be two sorts among us, the effect of it is as if a parting line should be drawn through a Congregation, severing the living from the dead, here are so many living, and so many dead Souls : Indeed it is a very hard supposition, to suppose that there should be any one in all this Assembly, that doth not love God : a very hard supposition : I am extreamly loth to make such a supposition : I would as much as in me is, not suppose it. For truly it were a very sad case that we should agree so far as we do in many other things, and not agree in this : That is, that we should agree so many of us to come all and meet together here in one place, agree to worship God together, agree to sing his Praises together, to seek his face together, to call upon his Name together, to hear his Word together, and not agree all to love God together : The God whom we worship, whom we invoke, whose Name we bear, and unto whom we all of us pretend : For who is there among us will say, I have no part in God ? And it were a most lovely thing, a most comely desirable thing that
all

all such Worshipping Assemblies, even this Worshipping Assembly, at this time, and all times, could still meet together under this one common notion, truly and justly assumed, as so many lovers of God: We are sure there will be an Assembly, a general Assembly, in which no one that is not a lover of God will be found, an Assembly of glorious Angels, and of the Spirits of just men made perfect, a numerous, an innumerable Assembly in which not one but a sincere lover of God. What a blessed thing were it if our Assemblies on earth were such! But we cannot speak more gently than to say there is cause to fear they are not such: it hath been actually otherwise among a people professing the true Religion, *They come before thee, and sit before thee as my people, and with their mouth show much love, with [their face] or in external appearance and shew [ore tenuis:] they are lovers of God, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them, Ezek. 33. 31.* If such a case hath been actually, it is still possible, and is still too much to be feared to be but too common a case.

But now supposing that there be different cases amongst us; in reference to these different cases, there must be very different deportments, and a very different management of our selves. This Text more naturally leads me to direct what is to be done upon the supposition of the sadder case,

case, most deplorably sadder, *that one is no lover of God*: though we must be led on thereto by some things common to both cases.

Therefore that I may proceed by steps, this is requisite in the first place; that is, *that we make one Judgment of our case or another*; that is, that we bring the matter some way to a Judgment, not let so great a thing as this hang always in suspense: It's very plain, (a little to press this:) That,

First; While the case hangs thus in suspense, it suspends the proper subsequent duty too that should follow hereupon: What canst thou do that is certainly fit and proper for thy own Soul when thou dost not understand the state of its case? How canst thou guide thy course, or tell which way to apply or turn thy self? And

Secondly, (to press it further) consider, That the not bringing, or omitting to bring this matter to a judgment, if it proceed from indifferency and neglect; speaks the greatest contempt that can be both of God and thine own Soul, the greatest that can be: that is now, supposing the question be askt, *dost thou love God?* or dost thou not? and thou unconcernedly answerest, I can't tell, I don't know: why what to be carelessly ignorant whether thou lovest God or lovest him not: there could not be a

more

more concluding medium against thee, that thou dost not love him. It speaks thee at once to despise both God and thy self: what to have this matter hang in indifferency through neglect! whether thou lovest God or lovest him not? it shews that neither regard to God, nor a just value of thy self makes thee care whether thou art an holy man or a Devil. For know, that the loving God, or not loving him, does more distinguish a Saint from a Devil, than wearing a body, or not wearing it can do: A Devil if he did love God were a Saint. A man that doth not love God, he is no other, though he wear a body, than an incarnate Devil: It's the want of love to God that makes the Devil a Devil, makes him what he is.

Secondly, For further direction, *Take heed of passing a false judgment in this case*, a judgment contrary to the truth; for first, That's to no purpose, it will avail thee nothing: you can't be advantag'd by it: for yours is not the supream judgment: there will be another and superior judgment to yours that will controul, and reverse your false judgment, and make it signifie nothing, it is therefore to no purpose: And

Secondly, It is a great piece of insolency, for it will be to oppose your judgment to his certain and most authoriz'd judgment: who

who, if this be your case, hath already judg'd it, and tells you, *I know you, that you have not the Love of G^d in you.* It belongs to him by office to judge. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, as a little above in this Chapter : From what will you depose him? dethrone him? *disannul his judgment? condemn him? that thou may be righteous?* (to borrow that *Job* 40. 8.)

Thirdly, It's most absurd supposing such characters as you have heard, do conclude against a man in this case, yet to judge himself a lover of God : if against the evidence of such characters a man should pronounce the wrong judgment it would be the most unreasonable and absurd thing imaginable : For then let us but suppose how that wrong judgment must lye, related to those fore-mention'd characters that have been given you.

Let me remind you of some of them.

He that never put forth the act of love to God, cannot say he hath the principle.

He that is not inclin'd to do good to others for the sake of God, *1 Joh. 3. 17.*

He that indulges himself in the inconsistent love of this world, *1 Joh. 2. 15.*

He that lives not in obedience to his known Laws, *Joh. 14. 15. 1 Joh. 5. 3.* (with many more.)

Now if you will pass a judgment of your case against the evidence of such characters,
come

come forth then, let the matter be brought into clear light, put your sense into plain words, and this it will be.

I am a Lover of God, or I have the love of God in me, though I can't tell that ever I put forth one act of love towards him in all my Life; I have the love of God in me, though I never knew what it meant to do good to any for his sake, against the express words of Scripture: *How dwelleth the Love of God in such a man?* I have the Love of God in me, though I have constantly indulged my self, in that which he maketh an inconsistent love: Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* I have the love of God in me, though I would never allow him to rule me, though I never kept his commandments with a design to please him, and comply with his will: I have the love of God in me, though I never valued his love: I have the Love of God in me though I never cared for his Image, for his presence, for his converse, for his interest and honour: I beseech you consider how all this will sound! Can any thing be more absurdly spoken? And shall it be upon such improbabilities or impossibilities as these, that any man will think it fit to venture his Soul! I'll pawn my Soul upon it, I'll run the hazard of my Soul upon it, I am a lover of God for all this? Would
you

— you venture any thing else so besides your Soul? Would you venture a finger so? an eye so? It's to place the name where there is nothing of the thing: It's to place the name of a thing upon its contrary: The Soul of man can't be in an indifferency towards God, but if there be not *love, propension*; there is *aversion*, and that's *hatred*: And, what is *hatred* to be called *love*? If you bear that habitual disposition of Soul towards God, to go all the day long with no inclination towards him, no thought of him, no design to please him, to serve him, to glorifie him: If this be your habitual temper, and usual course, will you call this love? Shall this contrariety to the love of God be call'd *love* to him? You may as well call water fire, or fire water, as so grossly mis-name things here, and therefore again: In the

Third place: That we may advance somewhat: *plainly and positively pass the true Judgment*. If the characters that you have heard do carry the matter so, come at last plainly and positively to pass the *true Judgment* of your own case, though it be a sad one, and tell your own Souls: Oh my Soul: Though I must *sadly* say it, I must say it: All things conclude and make against thee: *The Love of God is not in thee*: Why is it not as good this should be the present issue at your own barr, and at the tribunal of your own conscience,

conscience, as before God's Judgment Seat? Why should you not concur and fall in with Christ the authorized Judge? Whose Judgment is according to truth: Why this is a thing that must be done, the case requires it, and God's express word requires it, 1 Cor. 11. 31. Other previous and preparatory duty, plainly enjoyned, doth by consequence enjoin it, and requires that it follow, 2 Cor. 13. 5. what is examination for, but in order to judgment? It must therefore be done, and I shall show how it must be done, and proceed to some farther directions.

First, You must do it solemnly: Take your selves aside at some fit season or another: inspect your own Souls, review your life: Consider what your wonted frame and your ordinary course has been: And if you find by such characters as heretofore were given, this is the truth of your case, then let judgment pass upon deliberation, Oh my Soul! *Thou hast not the love of God in thee*: Whatsoever thine appearances hitherto have been: And whatsoever thy peace and quiet hath been, thou hast not the love of God in thee: Let it be done with Solemnity.

Secondly, Do it in the sight of God as before him, as under his eye, as *under the eye of Christ*: That eye that is as a flame of fire, that searches hearts and tryes reins: Arraign thy self before him: Lord! I have
here

here brought before thee a guilty Soul, a delinquent Soul, a wretched, an horrid delinquent, a Soul that was breathed into me by thee, an intelligent, understanding Soul, a Soul that hath love in its nature, but a Soul that never loved thee:

Thirdly, Judge thy self before him *as to the fact and as to the fault*: As to the fact, I have never yet loved thee, O God, I own it to thee: Lord! I accuse, I charge my Soul with this before thee, this is the truth of the fact, I have not the love of God in me: And charge thy self with the fault: Oh horrid creature that I am! I was made by thee, and don't love thee: thou didst breath into me this reasonable immortal Spirit, and it doth not love thee: It is thy own off-spring, and does not love thee: It can never be blessed in any thing but thee, and it does not love thee: And then hereupon in the

Fourth place, *Feyn to this self-judging, self loathing*: that we are to *Judge our selves*, is a law laid upon us by the supream Law-giver, the one Law-giver that hath power to save, and to destroy: And his word that enjoyns it, as plainly tells us what must go with it, that this self-judging must be accompanied with self-loathing: *Ezek. 6. 9. ch. 20. 43. and 36. 31.* Do God that right up-on thy self, that thou mayest tell him, Blessed God! I do even hate my self, because I find I have not lov'd thee, and I cannot but hate my

my self, and I never will be reconciled to my self till I find I am reconciled to thee: This is doing justice: Doth not the Scripture usually and familiarly so represent to us the great turn of the Soul to God: When poor sinners become penitents, and return, that they are brought to hate themselves, and loath themselves in their own eyes, and is there any thing that can make a Soul so loathsome *in it self*, or ought to make it so loathsome *to it self*, as not to love God, to be destitute of the love of God: And then,

Fifthly, *Hereupon too: Pity thy self, pity thy own soul*; there is cause to hate it, to loath it, and is there no cause to pity it? to lament it? doth not this look like a lamentable case? Oh! what a Soul have I that can love any thing else, that can love trifles, that can love impurities, that can love sin: and can't love God, Christ, the most desirable good of Souls? What a Soul have I? What a Monster in the Creation of God is this Soul of mine! Methinks you should set your selves, if any of you can find this to be the case, to weep over your own Souls: Some may see cause to say: Oh my Soul, thou hast in thee other valuable things, thou hast understanding in thee, judgment in thee, wit in thee: perhaps learning, considerable acquired indowments in thee: but thou hast not the love of God in thee: I can do many
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other commendable or useful things, I can
discourse plausibly, argue subtilly: I can
manage affairs dexterously, but I can't love
God: Oh my Soul, how great an essential
dost thou want to all Religion, to all Duty,
to all Felicity! The one thing necessary thou
wantest, thou hast every thing but what
thou needest more than any thing, more
than all things: And Oh my Soul, what is
like at this rate to become of thee? Where
art thou to have thy eternal abode? to
what regions of horror and darkness, and
woe, art thou going? what society can be
fit for thee? No lover of God! No lover of
God! what, but of infernal accursed Spirits
that are at utmost distance from him, and
to whom no beam of holy vital light shall
ever shine to all eternity: Thou Oh my Soul
art self-abandon'd to the blackness of dark-
ness for ever. Thy doom is in thy breast,
thy own bosom: Thy *no-love to God* is, thy
own doom, thy eternal doom: Creates
thee a present Hell, and shews whither thou
belongest.

Sixth place: *Let a due fear and solicitude
hereupon be set on work in thee*: For consider
thy self as one shortly to be arraign'd before
the Supream Tribunal: And then here is the
critical, vertical point upon which thy judg-
ment turns: Lovers of God; Or no Lovers
of God: All are to be judged in reference to
what they were and did in the body, whether
good

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good or evil: as in 2 Cor. chap. 5. ver. 10.
What wast thou as to this point, while thou
wast in the body? For the last Judgment re-
gards that former state, what thou didst; and
what was thy wont as to this whilst thou
wast in the body? Therefore by the way no
hope, after thou art gone out of the body:
Go out of the body no lover of God, the de-
parting Soul no lover of God, and this will
be found your state at the Judgment day:
You are not to expect after death a Gospel
to be preach't that you may then be recon-
cil'd to God: No; but what did you do in
the body? According to that you are to be
Judged: Did you love God in this body
while here, yea or no? And this is a tryal
upon the most fundamental point: For as
all the Law is comprehended in Love, as was
formerly hinted, if you be found guilty in
this point, that you were no lover of God,
totally destitute of the love of God, you
were a perpetual underminer of his whole
Government, of the whole frame of his law,
a Disloyal Creature, Rebellious and False to
the God that made you, to Jesus Christ
that redeemed you by his Blood: All dis-
obedience and rebellion is summ'd up in this
one word: *Having been no lover of God:*
And won't it make any mans heart to medi-
tate terror, to think of having such a charge
as this, likely to lye against him in the Judg-
ment of that day; that day when *the secrets*
of all hearts are to be laid open? Every work

must be then brought into Judgment, and every secret thing whether it be good or evil: Eccles.

12. 14. And it will be to the confusion of many a one: It may be your no-love of God was heretofore a great secret: You had a heart in which was no love of God, but it was a secret, you took not care to have it writ in your Forehead, you conversed with men so plausibly, no body took you to be no lover of God, to have a heart disaffected to God: But now *out comes the secret*, that which you kept for a great secret all your days, *out comes the secret*: and to have such a secret as this disclosed to that vast assembly before Angels and Men! Here was a Creature, a Reasonable Creature, an Intelligent Soul, that lived upon the Divine Bounty and Goodness so many years in the World below, and hid a false disloyal heart by a plausible shew, and external profession of great devotedness to God all the time of his abode in that World: Oh! What a fearful thing would it be to have this secret so disclosed: and do you think that all the Loyal Creatures that shall be the Spectators and Auditors *in the hearing* of that great day will not all conceive a just and a loyal indignation against such a one when convicted of not loving God, convicted of not loving him that gave him breath, him whose he was, to whom he belonged, whose name he bore? What a fearful thing will it be to stand convicted so upon such a point as this? and sure

in the mean time there's great reason for continual fear why a mans heart should meditate terror: One would even think that all the Creation should be continually every moment in Arms against him: One would be afraid that every wind that blows should be a deadly blast to destroy me: That when the Sun shines upon me, all its beams should be turn'd into vindictive flames, to execute vengeance upon me! I would fear that even the very stones in the streets should fly against me, and every thing that meets me be my death. For what! I have not the love of God in me! What to go about the streets from day to day with a heart void of the love of God! What a heart have I? Fear ought to be exercised in this case: We are bid to fear if we do evil against an humane Ruler: *If thou do that which is evil be afraid, for he beareth not the Sword in vain: Rom. 13. 4.* But if I be such an evil doer against the Supream Ruler, the Lord of Heaven and Earth: Have I not reason to be afraid? and to think sadly with my self what will the end of this be? But yet I will add in the

Seventh place: *Don't despair for all this:* God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself: As in that *2 Cor. chap. 5. v. 19.* that sin might not be imputed: He is in Christ to reconcile you to win hearts, to captivate Souls to the love of God: For what

For what else is reconciliation on our part?
 He is in Christ to reconcile, to conquer en-
 mity, to subdue disaffected hearts, to make
 such Souls call and cry: My Lord and my
 God! I have been a stranger to thee: I
 will through thy grace be so no longer,
 therefore don't despair: Despair that ever
 you should do well without loving of God:
 But don't despair you shall ever be brought
 to love him by no means: You have to do
 with him that is the element of Love, the
 God of Love, the Fountain of Love, the
 great Source of Love, the Fountain at once
 both of Loveliness and Love, whose *Nature*
is Love, and is *with his name* in his Son,
 who was manifested in the flesh full of grace
 and truth, i. e. *sincereſt love*. He was incar-
 nate Love, Love pointed at us, and is upon
theſe terms able to transform all the world
 into Love; the nature of God is all Love,
 1 Joh. 4. 16. and in Christ, he is *Emmanuel*,
 God with us, so the divine Love hath a di-
 rect aspect upon us: Why then apply your
 ſelves to him: Turn your ſelves towards
 him, open your Souls to him, ſay to him:
 Lord flow in with all the mighty powers
 of thine own love upon my Soul, thou that
 canſt of ſtones raiſe up Children, and make
 them the true genuine Sons of *Abraham*,
 and there can be no ſuch Children, with-
 out Love: Oh diſſolve this ſtone, this ſtone
 in my breaſt, mollify this obdurate heart,
 turn it into Love! How ſoon may it be
 done.

done upon due application ! He can quickly do it, draw thee into a Love-union with himself, so as that thou shouldest come to dwell in Love : And dwell in God, who is Love : And he in thee : Then the foundations are surely laid, for all thy future duty, and for all thy future felicity : Then how pleasantly wilt thou obey, and how blessedly wilt thou enjoy God for ever ! But such application must be made *through Christ, and for the Spirit* : Which Spirit is the Spirit of Love, and of Power, and of a sound mind, as you have it in that first of the second to *Tim. v. 7.* But these things I can't now further insist upon.

F I N I S.